

# SAMPLE B

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: **THEATRE**  
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: \_\_\_\_\_  
**How does the personification impact each character in the play *Little Shop of Horrors*?**

## Candidate's declaration

*If this declaration is not signed by the candidate the extended essay will not be assessed.*

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 3/2/09

IB Cardiff use only:

A: 46731 B: \_\_\_\_\_

## Supervisor's report

*The supervisor must complete the report below and then give the final version of the extended essay, with cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator. The supervisor must sign this report; otherwise the extended essay will not be assessed and may be returned to the school.*

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters) \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments

*Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 1 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. Comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.*

Supervisor:

choice for her extended essay was influenced in part by our upcoming musical production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. She has a genuine interest in theatre which enhanced her work ethic and involvement in the topic she selected. She consistently submitted all required work on time and communicated with me effectively. I believe the only difficulty for her was limited resources, due to the research question involving only one theatrical work. Had personification comparisons between several works been the focus, more varied resources could have been accessed. Having said that, she attempted to, and succeeded in, exploring her topic thoroughly. She matured her writing skills and use of vocabulary, and in her organizational skills. Her approach to the assignment was always positive and she was always ready to do more to improve her finished product.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent 4 hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 3/02/09

The abstract is descriptive & lacks focus.  
The term personification is never explored  
or defined in introduction & the EE  
mostly comes across as circumstantial  
until the analysis of Seymour's  
& Audrey's relationship (which is  
enlightening). An appropriate conclusion  
is missing.

Is the student using the school production  
(or any specific production) as the starting  
point? This seems to be the case but  
it is never clearly stated.

How does the personification impact each character in the play Little Shop of Horrors?

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 3181

## Abstract

How does the personification impact each character in the play Little Shop of Horrors?

The personification in Little Shop of Horrors affects each character in various ways that allow the characters to progress and regress according to their strengths and intentions. *subje*

The main characters Seymour and Audrey are the main focus of the plant, the Audrey II's, influence on them. Audrey II affects Seymour's weak personality effortlessly because the plant seems to be boosting Seymour's popularity with his boss Mr. Mushnik, and most importantly, Audrey herself. Audrey is Seymour's love interest and he constantly attempts to impress her and fears for her safety because of her sadist boyfriend. Seymour knows she deserves better, and he knows he could be what she deserves. When Audrey II enters his life, he is immediately consumed by the sudden power and control he possesses. Unfortunately, the plant has a greater influence on Seymour than he expects resulting in multiple tragedies.

Audrey is a quiet young girl who dreams of a better life but does nothing to achieve it; in fact, she is the girlfriend of the dentist, Orin, who revels in his profession of inflicting pain on others. Orin's strength and high confidence is a counter balance to Audrey's lack of confidence and fragility." Audrey's boyfriend, balances with her lack of confidence and fragility. Audrey is easily manipulated and Audrey II is well aware of this unfortunate characteristic. Audrey II begins by asking for water from the original Audrey then later uses Orin's sadistic ways as advantage for its own good.

As the story unfolds we see the succession of the characters and their attitudes toward defending their fervor. Thus, Audrey II plays a significant role in aiding Seymour and Audrey obtain the self-realization and buoyancy they longed to divulge

*this is a play sub*

4/8  
6

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Characters within a story always seem to change from beginning to end, but what causes these changes? In some cases it is other characters, objects that mean a lot to the character, or even a mix of both, a thing with its own character: a talking plant. It is important to know how each character is affected by personification in Little Shop of Horrors to determine whether or not they will progress or regress in the play. In order to understand how much of an impact a single difference in a person's daily routine can make, looking at a scenario will help. A psychiatrist brings in a piece of artwork to add life to her office and to bring out the inner feelings of her clients but unexpectedly, a client sees the artwork and goes insane because it reminds him of a life- changing incident that happened decades ago, which causes the psychiatrist to lose her client and gain a bad reputation, even though she is not aware a piece of artwork can cause so much damage. This topic is narrowed to a focus of more manageable proportions by the single impact of the personification. Allowing to see how each character is affected will reflect the characterization of the supporting characters. The question derived would be how does personification affect the characters in Little Shop of Horrors? The personification outlines the minor and major details of each character defining the growth or regression of their mental characteristics. Determination and intentions are analyzed, creating a clearer definition of what the character is trying to achieve.

The process of altering a characteristic can be based on surroundings involving people and objects. The characters in the play have different backgrounds and come from different places. Each one has experienced something different than the people they are interacting with each day. A single action can remind a character about a past event that may pleasure or even pain the memory. When the characters are exposed to present events it can bring out various moods and emotions, perhaps feelings that have been built

up over time that can erupt at any second. Future events can be altered by a single incident that can occur unexpectedly. How the characters set themselves up for being a part of such affairs is up to their ability to make decisions. The way the characters make their decisions and whether they plan the process or effects can determine the immense of an impact the occurrence can have on their lives. The characters in Little Shop of Horrors demonstrate the various aspects of impact on their decisions, lives, and relationships. A single incident created by one person can affect the whole population in a horrid way if treated with irresponsibility, neglect, or even too much maintenance. In order to overcome the challenges of the unwanted events the characters must remove themselves from a dream-set mode and think about the outcomes. They will be easily manipulated if there is no thought put into the events or even worse, if there is no awareness of what lurking amongst them.

The first character exhibited is Seymour Krelboyne, the protagonist of the play. Seymour is introduced as a feeble and fearful person who does not live up to society's standards of being a man. "Seymour's character is a bit of a meek pushover, oblivious to most everything, though good intentioned and good hearted. Sweet, but stupid"(Mayer). The actor who plays Seymour Krelboryne in Little Shop of Horrors sees the intentions of the character as pure and thoughtful. Seymour does not mean harm in any of his actions but does seem oblivious most of the time as to what he is doing. His surrounding peers see him as a pushover and take advantage of Seymour and are inappreciative of his interests and talent, especially with plants. Seymour's employer, Mr. Mushnik, is a stern man with ghastly intentions. Mr. Mushnik's main goal is to make a tremendous amount of profit in his plant shop and will obliterate anyone who gets in his way but will praise those who aid him in his goals. Mr. Mushnik's main dramatic purpose for being in the



play is to bring out Seymour's true character and potential. Mushnik demeans Seymour while he is bitter about his loss of profits but ultimately places him in a situation that divulges Seymour as tough and arduous. Seymour's life is relatively routine consisting of tending to the plant shop, tinkering with his own plant creations, and trying to win the heart of Audrey, his co-worker and friend. When asked what Seymour is trying to achieve, Sam Mayer replied, "Love with Audrey. But most of all, he just wants to get out of Skid Row"(Mayer).

Audrey is the female protagonist in the play who has the greatest influence on Seymour. She seems to inadvertently steal his heart but is constantly having her own heart broken by her boyfriend, Orin, who holds her hostage to denial. Audrey is a fragile character who is hopeless and trapped emotionally and physically. She hopes for improvement in her life but does nothing to achieve this hope because her self-esteem is so low. Audrey feels she is not worthy of anyone deserving; yet she is unaware of her potential and of the man who wants her. She remains obedient to Orin who is a destructive, vulgar, and crude man in order to feel wanted but is treated like she is garbage on the streets in return. Just as Mushnik degrades Seymour, Orin degrades Audrey. It should be apparent for Seymour and Audrey to coalesce and form a strong team but each one of them is too powerless, scared, and oblivious. Audrey's goal is to become a respected housewife who lives in the suburbs with a husband who cares for her and a good name to live by but is repressed because of Orin, her irresponsibility, and her powerless personality. "Really her heart is quite pure, though her personal habits and the people she spends time with (Orin the sadist dentist/boyfriend) would not really let you know it"(Cullotta).

The play would be nothing without the obdurate, immoral, and egocentric little

plant, The Audrey II. How can a plant have a personality, affect characters, and even potentially harm them? This plant has powers no other plant does. The plant was practically placed into Seymour's hands, which is thought to have mysteriously appeared during an eclipse of the moon causing it to have wicked powers. Seymour works hard tending to this plant and realizes the only way it will grow and live is through feeding it human blood. The plant then unveils its ability to talk, which throws everyone into frenzy. Seymour and Audrey both have supporting characters that defeat them mentally and physically. Mr. Mushnik and Orin seem to be the dark angels of Seymour and Audrey causing them to be weak and put them into abysmal situations. The Audrey II, however, does not have a dark angel, but instead is the ultimate leader of the two and serves to defeat those who believe they are powerful, such as Mr. Mushnik and Orin. The plant's past has really been nothing extraordinary and should emulate Seymour's influence since he raised it and prevented any damage threatened toward it. The plant proves to be very aggressive and needy of human blood, which he is ridiculously addicted to. The Audrey II grows up wanting more from its surroundings including the people, the objects, and overall power. "I feel my character wants to achieve a state of full power, respect, and dominion" (Thomas). According to Jasmine Thomas, the student who plays Audrey II in Little Shop of Horrors believes the plant wants control but then expands on her analysis by saying, "Initially my character wishes this to occur on Skid Row but the finale song 'Don't Feed the Plants' infers that my character wishes for this to occur across America" (Thomas).

Seymour grew up taking care of his grandmother who is very weak. He has been accustomed to responsibility and never really grew to be a man of his own. Seymour is and always was a person who can be controlled and manipulated. He strives for more and

hopes he can get Audrey, the girl of his dreams, but does not do anything to achieve those hopes and dreams but rather sits around tinkering with his plants and isolates himself from the public. When Seymour is handed the opportunity of fame and attention, he leaps for the chance to grab it and use it to his full advantage. This chance occurs when the plant he has been raising and tending to, the Audrey II, being to attract customers to Mr. Mushnik's shop when it is placed in the window display, all thanks to Audrey's idea. After realizing the immense impact the plant can have on his ability to achieve his goals, Seymour seizes on the chance of embracing it as much as he possibly can. When Sam Mayer was asked what Seymour is trying to do in order to achieve his goals he replied, "Not much until he becomes famous and starts to realize the new power he has over people"(Mayer). Mr. Mushnik is so pleased with all the business that is coming in that he begins praising Seymour and treats him with a better attitude of respect and gratitude. With all this attention and fame, Seymour is compelled to continue feeding the plant as much blood as he can in order to help the plant grow, the business grow, and himself as a person grow.

Audrey has convinced herself and others that she is a poor girl who is undeserving of a worthy life. With her low self-esteem it is understandable that she would be corrupt and prone to manipulation, even from a plant. From the scene in the play in which the plant is talking with Audrey it is plain to see how easily she can get taken manipulated. 'Plant- "I need me some water in the worst way" Audrey- "I don't know if I should." Plant- hey little lady, be nice" Audrey- "you just want water right..."(Ashman 88).

Separately, Seymour and Audrey are two extremely weak and fragile characters, but once placed together they seem to brighten each other's qualities and suddenly they

see the good in absolutely everything. What determines the unpleasantness of the plant and its ability to impact the characters is up to the characters themselves. Seymour starts out to be a man of little strength with hopes and dreams and no intentions of achieving them but then is manipulated by the plant in an indirect way. When Mr. Mushnik sees how incredible his business is doing because of the plant, he seems to encourage Seymour. Seymour now feels the need of constantly pleasing the plant and giving in to its wants and desire for blood. Audrey on the other hand is not encouraged, but rather deceived by the constant movie running in her head about becoming a respected housewife. She wants to be the ultimate respectable lady every other woman desires to become. When she observes the progression Seymour is in, and the attention he is starting to give her (thanks to his new found confidence) she advances into whole new level of confidence. When the plant acts in their favor Audrey and Seymour finally see themselves coming together and getting what they deserve. However, the plant achieving its goals by gaining their trust and thrusts into action concerning his new goal, which is power. "In order to reach these goals, Audrey II is basically preying on weak individuals that can be easily manipulated into fulfilling its will. My character is able to accomplish this by manipulating its prey to view the world differently. It expresses certain facts and presents certain events to those it tries to control in a negative fashion which builds up his trust and allows him to get exactly what he wants from his prey"(Thomas).

Seymour goes stoutly into the direction of his fame to see what can be gained from it and from the admiration of Audrey. The plant seems to grow and ask for more blood from Seymour to feed him. Seymour gives in every time and feeds Audrey II his own blood time after time. When Audrey II grows abnormally and Seymour cannot

accumulate enough blood to satisfy the treacherous plant he starts to get manipulated by the plant himself. Audrey II wants Seymour to do the unthinkable and kill Orin for the blood. When Seymour realizes how terrible that is, he retreats, but the plant persuades him to do it and eventually gets its way. Luckily, when Seymour goes to the Orin's office to get his tooth examined with the intent of murder on his mind, he runs into a favorable event. It seems Orin takes pleasure in the laughing gas a little too much, and with an exceeded intake of gas he dies instantaneously, a dead helpless body for Seymour to present to the plant. When Mushnik finds out Seymour's plans through police investigation and clues of death all over the shop, he probes Seymour and tries soliciting him for a confession but the plant manipulates Seymour once again in order to make Mushnik another one of his victims. He uses a clever tactic of convincing Mr. Mushnik that the money is inside the plant in order to insure his safety and tells him all he has to do is knock to get it. 'Mushnik "the money's inside the plant?" Seymour nods "so how am I supposed to get it?" "Just ... knock"'(Ashman 76-77). Seymour has little intention to fight the vicious urges of the plant but does defeat the minor villains in the play using the plant. Not only does the influence of the plant effect how Seymour behaves, but it also reflects the greater chance Seymour has in obtaining Audrey.

Audrey desires to get out of Skid Row and live the life she admires for herself but she does not do anything about it because she feels she must get a good man to get the life she wants although "you don't meet nice boys when you live on Skid Row"(Ashman). Eventually she gives in when the plant starts to crave her but Seymour comes to her rescue because he never wants to see her go. She explains to him that if the plant does eat her she will then get her dreams come true, not in the sense she wants, but all in all she will get what she wants. "It's the one gift I can give you. And if I'm in the plant, then I'm

part of the plant. So in a way...we'll always be...Together. Oh, don't you see? Finally I'll be somewhere that's green" (Ashman 90). Her determination is not the fact of defeating the plants manipulation, but the determination of getting what she wants even if it means literally. She will sacrifice her life in order to make the man she loves the most happy and would rather see him get everything he wants than himself. The plant brings out the best in Audrey and shows how caring, thoughtful, and deserving Audrey is. "Audrey is beautiful, sweet, but rather pathetic. She lives a hard life on Skid Row, wanting only for a homey, gentle lifestyle and someone to care for who really loves her in return. I'm not sure that Audrey has ever really known love, that is until she meets Seymour" (Cullotta).

With the end of Audrey and the obedience of Seymour to the plant the writer's intent in creating two weak characters that fall for each other reflects the strength and open-mindedness that can emerge from the amalgamation. "(Rises, pulls out gun, turns, and fires) Take that. (Drum plays two rim-shots to indicate the sound of the gun firing. THE PLANT laughs.) And that. (Two more rim-shots) And that. And that. And that. And that and -" (Ashman 92) Ashman suggests the new found confidence that Seymour has now that the plant ate the only thing he ever loved. The gun symbolizes his feelings being trapped within walls with no way of being released alone and Seymour represents the plant that pulls the trigger releasing every built up emotion.

The characters change is effected greatly by the treacherous plant that takes over their lives for his own self-enjoyment, well-being, and immorality. Seymour is influenced most of all by the plant and is the only character that can take anything from it. He shows growth through the change in character he had from the beginning of the play to the end. Seymour's main mistake was listening to the plant and giving in to its every need and

desire by doing exactly what he is told and not standing up for himself when he felt the need to. It seemed suitable at first when the plant was helping defeat the minor villains in the play such as Orin and Mr. Mushnik. Mr. Mushnik's abstinence means the responsibility handed to Seymour allowing us to think he will be stronger when he has to be in charge. Instead, he does not know how to deal with the responsibility and power that he abuses it and is overwhelmed when the plant starts to crave more. With the defeat of Orin comes the defeat of the wall that separates Seymour and Audrey but instead of positive intake and outcomes, comes more horrid events. This is because it is thought the plant will suddenly stop being the main villain now that the other two are conquered. The plant continues the sinfulness by requesting Audrey, and Audrey relents thinking it will be the right thing to do. Audrey's character is affected in such a striking way compared to Seymour. Audrey and Seymour both start out weak and powerless, but the interaction with the plant turns Seymour into a powerful man to the public, but advantageous to the plant. Audrey becomes open-minded and seems to surrender on her initial plan and become content with a more literal version just for her own satisfaction. When the plant interrupts Seymour's dream of being with Audrey, he becomes furious and brings out unexpectedly a new character, a wide-eyed furious man with the determination of achieving his initial plan. The plant, however, wins by the action of defeat: consuming him.

The plant is not the only influence that changes the characters but rather aides while the other characters help as well. Being able to see how each character transforms allows us to see what their thought process is and how much say they have in changing themselves. With the growth or set back of each character's mental characteristics it is easy to analyze the differences between the changes as well as the intentions they have

for each other. When Mushnik wants Seymour to confess his wrong doing instead of helping him, he is forced into the plant's mouth. The plant finally allows the character's goals to be illuminated but overshadows the hopes of achieving them by influencing their outcomes.

The RQ needs to be clearer.  
Better in the introduction  
what is the student's  
of personification & how  
will be used in the  
In the early part of  
the discussion  
to shift focus &  
though once the st  
starts to discuss  
relationship between  
Seymour & Mush  
the student reg  
there.



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December 2007.

# Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Candidate session number	0	0	
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Assessment criteria		Achievement level		
		First examiner	maximum	Second examiner
A	research question	2 ✓	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	introduction	1 ✓	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	investigation	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	knowledge and understanding	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	reasoned argument	3 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	analysis and evaluation	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	use of subject language	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	conclusion	1 ✓	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
I	formal presentation	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
J	abstract	0 ✓	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
K	holistic judgment	2 ✓	4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total out of 36		49 ✓		<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of first examiner: \_\_\_\_\_  
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of second examiner: \_\_\_\_\_  
(CAPITAL letters)

Examiner number: \_\_\_\_\_